

# Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

**A PRIMER OF ORTHOPAEDIC BIOMECHANICS**—George Van B. Cochran, MD, MScD, Director, Orthopaedic Engineering and Research Center, Helen Hayes Hospital, West Haverstraw, NY; Professor of Clinical Orthopaedic Surgery, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1982. 413 pages, \$48.00.

The cascade of engineering technology relevant to orthopedics makes this first edition text of Dr Cochran's unusually timely. Medical education including orthopedic resident training is generally deficient in the important subject matter presented. The orderly simplicity with which Dr Cochran has covered the large field of biomechanics makes his book easy reading and understandable. He has overcome the "terminology barrier" and "math anxiety" so frequently encountered by surgeons attempting to understand the fundamental physical information relevant to human stance and movement.

The relatively new field of biomechanical and rehabilitation engineering is attracting students from a wide variety of disciplines including mechanical, electrical, chemical and materials engineering. Currently, orthopedics involves human body interfacing with a great many inert materials. These vary from external prosthetic and orthotic devices to a numerous and sometimes confusing number of implanted products replacing joints, stabilizing fractures and generally improving function, relieving pain and providing cosmesis.

Dr Cochran is highly qualified to write the material presented in this book. It was a delight to read. The book should be included as required reading for orthopedists and engineers involved in biological technology. It is sufficiently basic and informative that its inclusion in required reading for medical students should be considered. Physical therapists, prosthetists, orthotists, occupational therapists, and other allied health personnel involved in rehabilitation of patients with mobility deficits will also find the material informative and challenging.

ERNEST M. BURGESS, MD  
Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery  
University of Washington, School of Medicine  
Principal Investigator and  
Director of Prosthetic Research Institute  
Seattle, Washington

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**SNAKE VENOM POISONING**—Findlay E. Russell, MD, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Arizona, Tucson; Adjunct Professor of Neurology, University of Southern California, Los Angeles; and Adjunct Professor of Neuro-pharmacology, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California. Scholium International, Inc., 265 Great Neck Rd., Great Neck, NY 11021, 1983. 562 pages, \$57.50.

The author, Dr Findlay Russell, is an internationally recognized authority on animal toxins and human envenomation. His book represents the culmination of a lifetime of work with over 25 years of clinical and research experience in this specialized field. The result is the definitive and up-to-date textbook on venomous snakes and their disastrous encounters with man. Dr Russell writes not only from extensive personal experience but with an intimate knowledge of the world's literature. His library contains every published book concerning biology of snakes, pharmacology and chemistry of their venom, and the effects of their bites, as well as collected reprints from the literature of the world's journals—many in foreign languages. Fortunately for the reader, Dr Russell has evaluated this mass of literature for accuracy and for significance.

The writing in such comprehensive texts often tends to be dull and trite. However, this book may be read for pleasure as well as profit. Dr Russell's book is a delight to peruse, whether

or not one ever encounters a snake-bitten patient. Dr Russell does not hesitate to add the personal touch—he is not afraid to use the pronoun "I" or to boldly state his personal opinion. There are flashes of humor throughout the text. Rarely does one encounter a scholarly book so enjoyable to read.

While the book was written with practicing physicians in mind, it includes the basic knowledge of snake biology essential to better patient care. The subject matter covers the structure and behavior of both North American and exotic foreign snakes (which one may encounter in treating proprietors of "underground zoos"), the composition and pharmacology of venoms, the medical treatment of snakebite (with a caution about the surgical treatment) and myths and folklore that surround these misunderstood reptiles. As an encore, Dr Russell covers the problems of envenomation by the dreaded lizards of the southwest, Gila monsters and beaded lizards.

The publishers have produced a book with large clear type, profusely illustrated with Dr Russell's photographs and line drawings. The cover is certain to catch one's eye on any bookshelf. This book is easy to read even by a weary clinician after a hard day's work.

Only approximately 7,000 snakebites will reach the medical profession each year. Consequently, practitioners often are uncertain about the therapy for this emergency in their panic-stricken patients. Dr Russell's tome, therefore, should be in the library of every hospital that offers emergency services. It should be required reading for all emergency room physicians and is highly recommended for all practitioners in areas in which venomous snakes abound—particularly, the south and southwest. Since snakebites involve many disciplines (immunology, pathology, chemistry and pharmacology), the book should be a welcome and authoritative addition to these libraries. Finally, even a physician practicing in the heart of a large city might enjoy reading this book. Who knows when a physician may be called upon to treat a patient who has just been bitten by a "pet" cobra?

WILLIS A. WINGERT, MD  
Professor of Pediatrics, Community Medicine,  
Public Health and Emergency Medicine  
USC School of Medicine  
Director, Pediatric Ambulatory Service  
LAC/USC Medical Center  
Los Angeles

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**CARDIOVASCULAR PATHOLOGY—Volumes I and II**—Edited by Malcolm D. Silver, MD, PhD, FRCPA, FRCP(C), Professor and Chairman, Department of Pathology, Health Sciences Centre, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Medicine, and Chief of Pathology, University Hospital, London, Ontario. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1983. 1,407 pages, \$190.00.

This is a two-volume treatise on cardiac pathology edited by M. D. Silver and written by a distinguished international panel of pathologists with special interest in cardiovascular diseases. There are 37 chapters which cover not only the standard subjects but several pathological aspects of present-day cardiac technology (cardiac pacing, coronary bypass grafts). Throughout the text, great weight is given to clinical considerations and clinical-pathological correlations, which makes the book particularly valuable to clinical cardiologists.

Despite the multiplicity of authors, the book is well edited—chapters are clearly written with a minimum of overlap in related subjects. The print and illustrations are excellent and each chapter has a well-edited bibliography.